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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 003391

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NSC FOR GREEN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION FILES IMPEACHMENT CHARGES AGAINST ARROYO

REF: A. OPS CENTER - MANILA 07/25/05 TELCON

[1](#)B. MANILA 3367

[1](#)C. MANILA 3326

[1](#)D. MANILA 3319

Classified By: Political Officer Timothy Cipullo for
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Opposition filed amended impeachment charges in the House of Representatives against President Arroyo early July 25. The Opposition complaint charges that Arroyo betrayed public trust, violated the Constitution, and engaged in corrupt practices. The impeachment complaint did not obtain the requisite number of endorsements needed to move the matter immediately to the Senate. Instead, the House Committee of Justice will review it for up to 60 days. Malacanang has confirmed that last week it filed a response denying all charges in the original impeachment complaint filed against Arroyo. The impeachment charges are complex and will take time for the House to digest. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Forty members of the House of Representatives, led by opposition Congressmen Ronaldo Zamora and Francis Escudero, endorsed an amended impeachment complaint against President Arroyo early July 25. The complaint is very detailed, and accuses Arroyo of "betrayal of public trust," "culpable violation" of the Constitution, and "bribery, graft and corrupt practices" during her tenure at Malacanang. The complaint highlights alleged illegalities involved in President Arroyo's audio taped discussions with an election official in the aftermath of the May 2004 elections and allegations that members of her family engaged in jueteng profiteering. The motion builds upon a complaint filed by private citizen Oliver Lozano just before the House of Representatives went into recess last month (see reftels). (Note: With President Arroyo's State of the Nation Address late July 25, the House and Senate begin a new session. End Note.)

[1](#)3. (C) The Opposition fell short of garnering the 79 signatures (1/3 of the members of the House) needed to send the complaint directly to the Senate. Instead, it will be referred to the House Justice Committee, which will determine whether it is sufficient in form and substance. The Committee has 60 session days to act on the complaint, after which the House will vote on whether to send the complaint to the Senate. (Note: If it is sent to the Senate, senators will serve as a jury reviewing the charges and then will vote on them. End Note.) Representative Zamora predicted to us early July 25 that the Opposition will have the necessary 79 votes to send the complaint to the Senate by the time the House makes its ultimate decision on the matter. Zamora also asserted to us that Malacanang has bribed members of the House not to support the impeachment complaint. Malacanang contacts have asserted to us that they have the votes in the House to prevent a referral to the Senate and have denied that they have bribed anyone.

[1](#)4. (U) Malacanang confirmed that on July 19 the President's legal counsel submitted anticipatory pleadings in response to the original impeachment complaint filed by Lozano. The document denied the original charges. Arroyo's press spokesman Ignacio Bunye characterized the decision to file the anticipatory pleadings as "a clear expression of (Arroyo's) willingness to submit to the legal process," but he noted that she will defend herself fully. Opposition members, however, have labeled the move as a legal ploy to block further amendments to the original complaint, such as those filed on July 25.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: The Opposition, which is constantly looking for ways to ramp up the pressure on Arroyo, clearly wanted to get the requisite number of signatures needed for an immediate impeachment referral to the Senate. They were disappointed in that effort. The Opposition, however, still has a chance to attain the needed figure, but the impeachment charges are complex and will take time for the House to digest. By already filing a response to the initial complaint, Malacanang is signaling that it will fight the impeachment effort every step of the way.

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